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Poppies, Pipes, and People: Opium and Its Use in Laos

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with the study of the customs and languages of the indigenous peoples of post-World War II Netherlands New Guinea. Regrettably, the headings and the introduction have not been translated into English, something that could have been done without too much effort on the part of the compilers, and which would have made this part of an otherwise excellent reference work much more useful to the Anglophone. Author, geographic, and tribal names are not covered in the indexes. The last mentioned is a significant shortcoming that is not quite offset by references to some of the reports in the bibliographic narratives in the main work. Otherwise this scholarly publication is an accomplishment the compilers can truly be proud of and that will, no doubt, be the best in the field for a long time to come.

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Poppies, Pipes, and People: Opium and Its Use in Laos. BY JOSEPH WESTERMAYER. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983. xxii, 336 pp. Maps, Tables, Plates, Glossary, Bibliography, Index. \$28.50.

For the decades 1956–1975 there was major American involvement in Laos, motivated primarily by politico-military strategic concerns related to the Vietnam War. This engagement did, however, encompass concerns dealing with socioeconomic development. Many behavioral scientists and other professional personnel, including the author of this study, were brought in by the Americans. Joseph Westermeyer, a psychiatrist at the University of Minnesota who holds adjunct appointments in psychology and anthropology, has produced one of the few American scholarly monographs, apart from writing on politics, resulting from this experience. His study of opium addiction in Laos is addressed to public-health workers concerned with drug abuse as well as to Asianists and social scientists. He sums up available information on the agro-economics of poppy cultivation among the Hmong (Meo), and he also deals with the first stage of the marketing of raw opium through itinerant traders and town merchants. Westermeyer summarizes the results of surveys that he undertook in rural and urban Laos and among the various ethnic groups and social classes, including resident foreigners. Appropriately, he stresses the complexity of addiction and details the ways in which individual lives can become dominated by opium consumption.

Using Lao, Hmong, French, and English as research languages, Westermeyer presents his data both from the viewpoint of a practicing physician associated with the American aid program in Laos, and from that of a social scientist. Each chapter contains extensive citations from case histories. These deal with the epidemiology of addiction, addict groups, the operation of opium dens, and the appearance of heroin use in the early 1970s, the latter correlated with the appearance of a substantial addict population of Caucasians. Treatment programs are evaluated, and the use of other drugs such as alcohol, tobacco, betel, and cannabis is considered. Westermeyer also shares his personal experiences as a physician, detailing certain of the settings in which the interviews with addicts took place.

Given these considerable insights, the book is a unique and valuable contribution to an important topic. Significant as this work is, editorial assistance would have greatly strengthened it. Summary paragraphs at the ends of chapters are more appropriate to a briefing manual than to a volume published by a university press. Matters such as details of methodology and a listing of the precise times and circumstances of fieldwork

are best located in footnotes or appendixes. A glossary might have included definitions of medical terms and some of the in-text definitions of background cultural data.

Westermeyer, a careful researcher, avoids considering the political implications of the opium trade, for example, with respect to influences on Royal Lao government policies. References on this subject (such as Alfred W. McCoy's, *The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia*) are not listed in the bibliography nor is there any reference to the extensive interest of the French colonial administration in promoting the cultivation of the opium poppy. The amount of information on post-1975 Communist Laos is limited, but some data exist on how that government is dealing with the opium problem. Finally, although Westermeyer makes scattered references to the drug-related health problems of Laotian immigrant groups such as the Hmong in the United States, he does not provide an overall assessment. Nevertheless, this is a unique and enlightening volume, and one wishes that the author would have shared even more of his knowledge with the reader.

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Thailand: A Short History. By DAVID K. WYATT. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1984. xviii, 351 pp. Illustrations, Tables, Notes, Index, Appendixes, Maps, Annotated Bibliography. \$27.50.

This book provides an excellent overview of Thailand's history. It is written primarily for the general reader, but David Wyatt's professional colleagues will find it a valuable resource as well. It is arranged chronologically and takes the reader from the beginnings of Thailand's history up to 1982.

One of the book's many strengths is its detailed account of history prior to the Ayudhya and Bangkok periods. The early chapters introduce the reader to political and social organization of the Tai peoples in the first millennium A.D. A subsequent chapter focuses upon the emergence of such Tai states as Lan Na and Sukhothai (1200–1351) in what is now northern Thailand. The next few chapters follow the Tai into the large Central Plain "that alone would support the expansion and enrichment of a population to the point where it could form the basis of a major kingdom" (p. 36), and the establishment of such a kingdom at Ayudhya (1351–1767). The Bangkok Empire (1767–1932) is covered in considerable detail. Each ruler from Taksin down to King Prajadhipok is examined along with the major aspects of his reign. The book ends with two chapters on Thai history since 1932.

The book is extremely well written and is rich in analysis and detail. At the risk of oversimplification, some of its main themes are the growth and expansion of Tai states, rulers' efforts to institutionalize and legitimize their power during this process, and the opportunities and threats the international environment provided these rulers. Since the first millennium one of the main problems for Tai rulers has been the control over manpower in a region of abundant land. Throughout the book Wyatt does an excellent job of explaining how this control was achieved through the creation of hierarchical, intensely personal patron-client ties. In the early Tai *muang*, or small principalities, these ties extended over only a few villages. In the Ayudhya period the state had become much larger and more bureaucratized, but, even so, kings "still founded—and lost—their power on the pyramiding of personal relationships" (p. 97). These relationships continued into the Bangkok period, and Wyatt clearly shows how they blocked any initiative for fundamental reform under King Mongkut and stymied initial